

**Public Relations Portrayed on Television:**

**A Content Analysis of *The Spin Crowd***

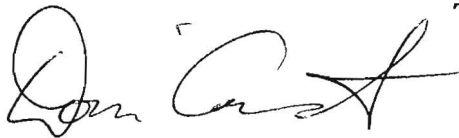
**An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)**

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dom Caristi", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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## ABSTRACT

This project used a content analysis to examine the portrayal of public relations on television. The study specifically focused on the reality television show, *The Spin Crowd*, but also used *What I Like About You*, *Sex and the City*, and *Power Girls* to support the findings. The study found that public relations is falsely portrayed on television, which adds to the misconceptions about the profession.

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## INTRODUCTION

### *What is Public Relations?*

As a public relations student, I regularly find myself attempting to answer the question, “So what exactly is public relations?” I’ve noticed that the easiest answer is to compare public relations to marketing or journalism or advertising. That answer seems to satisfy most people, but it doesn’t satisfy me. While public relations does share similarities with the aforementioned professions, there is more to it. And it’s more than publicity, which many people often think of as the only function of the profession. It is a broad term that encompasses research, strategy, communication, relationships, event planning, media relations, writing, and implementation (Wilcox, 2006).

Although the term public relations wasn’t coined until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of the practice goes back to ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman times (Wilcox, 2006). Some people claim that the Rosetta Stone was like a publicity release regarding the Pharaoh’s accomplishments (Wilcox, 2006). The first examples of public relations in America surrounded the American Revolution. The Boston Tea Party could even be considered a publicity stunt (Wilcox, 2006). Then, as westward expansion began, public relations was most often used by the railroad companies. The Santa Fe Railway created a campaign to attract tourists to the Southwest. The company used promotional brochures and hired painters and photographers to depict the landscape and culture of the area (Wilcox, 2006).

It was between 1900 and 1950 that public relations really started to transform and some of the most influential people in the industry emerged. One of these people was Ivy Lee, known as the first public relations counselor. Lee opened a firm focused on public

information and was later hired by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. following the Ludlow Massacre at the family's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company plant (Wilcox, 2006).

Lee was the first public relations counselor, but it is Edward B. Bernays who is credited as the father of modern public relations (Wilcox, 2006). Bernays created a public relations model based on advocacy and scientific persuasion, and he wrote a book in which he described the function, methods, techniques, and social responsibilities of a public relations counsel (Wilcox, 2006).

Following the 1950s, the economy grew and big business became a common part of American culture. This meant effective communication was an even greater necessity (Wilcox, 2006). Today, public relations has become one of the fastest growing professions in the nation, and it's expected to grow 24% by 2018 (Wiedower, 2011).

Even with this growth, people still don't understand that public relations is a process involving research, analysis, policy formation, programming, communication, and feedback (Wilcox, 2006). The concept of public relations could be difficult to grasp because the majority of public relations results are intangible. It's not like marketing where the effectiveness of a plan can be measured by the return on investment. Instead, public relations is about getting positive news coverage, educating people about a concept, and managing relationships (Larson, 2004).

Negative stereotypes perpetuated by television and journalists increase the confusion. Many times, television gives the impression that public relations is a great field for meeting exciting people, going to parties, and doing a lot of trivial self promotion (Wilcox, 2006). A study of jokes and cartoons in the media found that public relations was exaggerated as lying, hype, spin, and cover-up, so it's not uncommon for

journalists to refer to public relations people as “spin doctors” (Wilcox, 2006). The word “spin” has a negative connotation in the public relations world, and it’s a word that the profession has tried to overcome.

### *Effects of Television on Society*

Media plays a major role in society. Whether it’s print, online, television, or social media, the media provides news to society. Television is especially prominent because of the access it has to people. Today, 98% of households have at least one television set, and the average American watches about four hours of television everyday (Cyber College, 2009). Shows become part of people’s life. They connect to the characters and the story line (Pitner, 2009). If you watch something each week you begin to trust it. When this happens people start picking up on the terminology that is used and consider the show to be a reliable source for learning about whatever the topic may be. When people hear a term over and over again, it gets infused in their minds and it doesn’t matter whether or not it is accurate (Worrell, 2007). When people see something repeated week after week it tends to have a lasting influence on perceptions (Gibelman, 2004). People who watch *The Spin Crowd* will become very familiar with the word ‘spin,’ which will not only influence their perception but could possibly lead to an association of public relations and spin. This, unfortunately, would be a negative example.

Many shows today depict our current society’s norms. However, these shows can easily depict what the producers would like to present as the norm (Pitner, 2009). After repeated viewings, these things eventually become the norm. This happens a little bit at a time. The more an audience sees something, the more likely it is that the shock value will wear off (Pitner, 2009). Then, before you know it, the behavior is considered normal. For

example, most shows portray people as successful, wealthy, and happy. This is opposite of the way society actually is – most people are really middle class. However, this leads to the beliefs that extravagant lifestyles are normal, and money leads to happiness (Pitner, 2009). This is what happens with regular television programming, but reality television could make the effects on society even greater. If people were watching something that is considered to be real they would probably be more willing to perceive it as true.

### *Reality Television*

Reality television is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it dates back to 1948 with Alan Funt's series, *Candid Camera* (Slocum, n.d.). Just two years later, *Truth or Consequences* aired and frequently used hidden cameras. These series were the first to create artificial realities to see how ordinary people would react (Slocum, n.d.). Several other shows of this kind followed, but it wasn't until the 1970s when the term "reality tv" was actually coined. After *An American Family* chronicled the lives of the Loud family, it was determined that this type of television had gone beyond that of a documentary (Slocum, n.d.).

It was in the early 2000s that reality television really took off in America, thanks to a European import, *Big Brother* (Slocum, n.d.). The concept of *Big Brother*, mixed secret cameras, setups, personal revelations, explorative impulse, and voyeuristic appeal into one format (Slocum, n.d.). Having so many aspects to the show meant that more structure was needed to ensure the success of the show. Casting became an important part of the process, and now the term "scripted reality" is often used regarding reality television.

Reality television has become extremely popular, with shows about makeovers, dating, physical challenges, talent contests, celebrity lives, and more. This popularity comes from a need to see something relevant to the audiences' own lives (Slocum, n.d.). Something about it makes people feel better about their own lives. People want to know that they aren't alone in their experiences, and many times, the situations are far more extreme than the viewer's problem (Slocum, n.d.). Another thing that contributes to this is that real people are going through the experiences, not actors, so it's more relatable. This also allows viewers to fanaticize about fame. Viewers watch ordinary people become important to millions of people, and many secretly like the thought that the next celebrity just might be them (Reiss, 2001).

#### *Hypothesis and Research Question*

Based upon the secondary research, the following hypothesis and research questions were developed:

(H1): *The Spin Crowd* will falsely portray the public relations profession and the role of the public relations practitioner.

(RQ1): What is the difference between professional and unprofessional behavior on *The Spin Crowd*.

(RQ2): What is the focus of *The Spin Crowd*?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Content Analysis*

A content analysis is a systematic technique used to make inferences based on characteristics of a message (Stemler, 2001). This technique can be applied to text, art, television, or movies. No matter what medium the technique is applied to, the goal remains the same. The content analysis is meant to reflect attitudes, interests and values of people (Krippendorff, 2004). This makes its helpful to analyze trends and patterns, not only in the document or show, but also in society (Stemler, 2001). In order to do this, the content analysis must be sure to identify and define the data to be analyzed, select a sample, create a methodology, and determine a goal for the project (Stemler, 2001).

### *Sampling*

The sample for this content analysis consisted of episodes from the reality television show, *The Spin Crowd*. Kim Kardashian developed the concept for the show and is also a producer. After testing the show with the title, *Spindustry*, the E! Network decided to pick it up for a full season in the fall of 2010, calling it *The Spin Crowd* (E! Website, 2011). The show is supposed to be a behind the scenes look at the way a public relations firm operates.

Currently, there is one season of *The Spin Crowd*, and it consists of eight episodes. In general, the premiere and finale of a series are less like the rest of the season. Therefore, these episodes were not included in the content analysis because they might not be consistent with the others. Episode four was also not included in the research because it was used for testing purposes. The five episodes that were viewed for the

actual content analysis were roughly 21:45 minutes long. As a result, for the five episodes, a total of 108 minutes of programming were analyzed.

### *Content Measures*

To analyze the programming, coders were asked to make tally marks each time one of the sampling units appeared on the show. A sampling unit is meant to identify a message or message component. (Neuendorf, 2002) This can be in the form of words, characters, time periods or interactions. For the purposes of this research, the sampling unit focused on words and behaviors that related to the terms being measured: public relations activities, unprofessionalism, appearance, sexuality, and partying. Because each of these topics is very broad, it was important to operationalize each term. This made it easier to code, which allowed for the content to be measured more easily.

### *Reliability*

When conducting research, it is important for the process to be easily replicated at a later date if necessary. This is supposed to be a way to ensure reliability. If the research is repeated and yields the same results, then the procedure is considered reliable.

(Nuendorf, 2002) If the research process involves humans then this is referred to as intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability means that the individual coders came to the same conclusion when evaluating the content. (Lombard, 2010) For this project, intercoder reliability is based on the number of tally marks made by each coder. Intercoder reliability is important because the research method would be considered low quality if there were a high level of disagreement among the coders. (Lombard, 2010)



For the study three coders participated. One was the researcher, a 22-year-old female, who had seen the show several times. The next coder was a 24-year-old female who had not seen the show but was familiar with it. The third coder was a 50-year-old female who had never even heard of the show. This range helped add more representation of the population into the sample, but this meant that clearly operationalized definitions were even more important to keep everyone on the same page.

Coder training was used as another way to increase the likelihood of intercoder reliability. A pilot test was conducted to assess reliability. This test used episode number four, which was not included in the actual research sample. Testing the process allowed for adjustments to the coding guide if discrepancies occurred among the coders. Using the various interpretations from the coders made sure that the most reliable coding guidelines were established.

### *Validity*

Validity is concerned with measuring what the researcher intends to measure (Trochim, 2006). Because validity is rooted in the conclusions reached during the methodology, there is always the possibility of threats to validity. Threats to validity are anything that could cause a conclusion to be different from others doing the same tests (Trochim, 2006).

The test episode also allowed the researcher to check validity. The test episode allowed the coders to make sure they understood the operational definitions. It also gave them a chance to practice the process and become more comfortable with the coding. During the episode, the coders were allowed to discuss their reasoning for making tally

marks. Each coder had a coder guideline, but everyone interprets things differently, so these discussions helped ensure that everyone had the same understanding. The session was good for clarification because once the study actually started the participants were not allowed to talk during the viewing sessions.

### *Coding Instrument*

Each coder was given a set of guidelines. This acted as a tool for coders to use when determining what to count or not to count while viewing each episode. Because everyone interprets things differently, it is very important to define things as clearly as possible. The coder guideline included the operational definitions of public relations, unprofessional public relations behaviors, appearance, sexuality, and partying. The complete coder guideline can be found in the appendix.

### *Public Relations*

The operational definition for public relations was derived from the definition given on the Public Relations Society of America's website: "Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other" (2011). A more detailed definition described public relations as a management function that encompassed the following (PRSA Website, 2011):

- Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.
- Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.
- Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing;

financial; fund raising; employee, community or government relations; and other programs.

- Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy. Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.

It also included a definition from Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics, which states: "Public relations is a communication function of management through which organizations adapt to, alter, or maintain their environment for the purpose of achieving organizational goals" (Wilcox, 2006). Examples of public relations activities were included as well to help the coders better understand the process.

### *Unprofessional Behavior*

The PRSA Code of Ethics was used as a starting point for defining unprofessional behavior. Anything that contradicted the Code of Ethics was counted as unprofessional. A list of other behaviors was added to make the definition more conclusive. Also, behaviors listed as unprofessional counted only if they occurred at the work place or at work-related functions.

### *Appearance*

Past content analyses that operationalized the term appearance were used to define appearance for this study. These definitions also helped the researcher create additional examples to include in the operational definition.

### *Sexuality*

Several past content analyses have also operationalized sex and/or sexuality. These were a starting point for determining the appropriate definitions for this study. In addition, a number of other examples were used based on internet searches of sexuality. This allowed for the most updated version of the operationalized definition.

### *Partying*

The operational definition of partying was derived from college students' personal experiences. By surveying some students at Ball State University, a list was compiled of what partying is perceived as today. This became the operational definition for partying used in this study.

### *Data Analysis*

For each episode the coders made tally marks according to the appropriate categories. For each category, the number of tally marks never varied by more than three between the coders. Because the number of occurrences were consistent among the coders, the number of tallies made by each of the coders were added together and averaged to determine the number of instances for each category in each episode.

To determine the results for the season as a whole, the averages that were calculated for each episode were summed. This number represented the total number of occurrences for each category over the course of the season. The totals were divided by five to find the averages for each episode.

## RESULTS OF THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the content analysis. The results were determined using the method described above in order to answer the research questions and determine whether or not the hypothesis is supported.

### *Research Questions Results*

(RQ1): What is the difference between professional and unprofessional behavior on *The Spin Crowd*.

Based on the averages of the three coders, there was a total of 34 examples of professional public relations behavior in the five episodes. This averages seven occurrences per episode. The number of unprofessional occurrences totaled 69, which averages 14 per episode. This means that *The Spin Crowd* showed twice as many unprofessional examples than professional examples, which would lead the audience to believe that public relations is an unprofessional industry.

(RQ2): What is the focus of *The Spin Crowd*?

The averages of the coders resulted in 170 instances of appearance, sexuality, and partying. This is five times the number of professional public relations examples. In fact, there are 67 more occurrences of appearance, sexuality, and partying than the number of both professional and unprofessional public relations behaviors combined. This gives the impression that public relations is more about appearance, sexuality, and partying than actual public relations functions. With an average of 15 occurrences per episode, it seems as if sexuality is the biggest part of the public relations world. There was an average of 12 examples of appearance and seven examples of partying in each episode.

### *Hypothesis Results*

(H1): *The Spin Crowd* will falsely portray the public relations profession and the role of the public relations practitioner.

Public relations incorporates research, strategy, communication, relationships, event planning, media relations, writing, and implementation. However, the results have shown that *The Spin Crowd* represents appearance, sexuality, and partying as the main concerns in the show. These three things are not part of public relations, so it would support the hypothesis that public relations is falsely portrayed.

The industry has also worked to make public relations a more respected profession. Associations like the Public Relations Society of America have created professional standards and offer seminars for professional development (PRSA Website, 2011). This same standard is not seen in *The Spin Crowd* given that there are more unprofessional examples seen in the show than professional examples. This also supports the hypothesis.

## DISCUSSION

### *The False Portrayal of Public Relations on The Spin Crowd*

Public Relations to many seems like a career that is all about glamour and publicity. While this is true for a very small fraction of the industry, it is unfair to portray the entire profession as such. *The Spin Crowd* encourages this type of thought. In every episode the girls are seen at a big event, partying alongside celebrities. This can be a perk of the job, but there is a lot of work that happens before the event occurs, and this hard work is not so glamorous. This show doesn't let the viewers see this part of the job, because audiences want excitement. Even though they are watching "reality," they want to escape reality (Cyber College, 2009). Watching someone draft a press release isn't going to hold the audience's attention. Therefore, there is more focus on the drama of personal lives and the interaction among the girls than the stress of the events coming together.

Another common stereotype that *The Spin Crowd* supports is that you have to be a sexy woman to work in the public relations field. There's nothing wrong with being a beautiful career woman, but it is a problem when beauty is associated with a lack of brains. The staff at Command PR consists of four women who are young, pretty, and fashionable. For the staff biographies, Lauren is described as a blonde bombshell who is sexy, confident, and has a flirty relationship with her boss (E! Website, 2011). Not only is the description unprofessional, it doesn't highlight any public relations skills.

The results also showed that a heavy emphasis was placed on appearance throughout the duration of the programing. Although sexuality had the most references, there were still more occurrences of appearance than public relations activity. The

women are praised more for their outfits than they are for their work. Jonathan, the owner of Command PR, even pressures the girls to look a certain way. In one episode, he tells Erica that she should dress more like Lauren if she wants to be successful in the business (Spin Crowd, 2010). That day Lauren was wearing a mini skirt with a low cut tank top that revealed side cleavage. It's important to take into consideration that the office is located in Los Angeles, and Command PR specializes in in celebrity public relations so the dress code may differ from what one would normally see in an office setting. However, it probably seems very unprofessional to the average viewer. It also reinforces the idea that public relations is more concerned with how people look rather than the work they do.

Appearance was a major part of the unprofessionalism seen in *The Spin Crowd*, but it was not the only one. Overall, there were twice as many unprofessional instances than there were examples of professional behavior. Whether it was lying to employees or clients, discussing sex lives, or getting drunk on the job, the episodes make it easy to question the ethics of public relations. Ethics has become an important part of business so if a company lacks ethics, it is generally looked down upon by the public. Because public relations has been associated with spin and deception, several people consider "ethical public relations" to be an oxymoron (Bowen, 2007). However, as the profession has grown, the focus on ethics has also increased. Currently, ethical practices depend on codes of ethics created by professional associations, such as the Public Relations Society of America. Members agree to abide by these codes, but membership is not required to practice public relations (Bowen, 2007). Codes of ethics often receive criticism though because they aren't necessarily enforced. Therefore, other methods for analyzing and



handling dilemmas have been created by public relations scholars. One example is the dialogical ethics method, which focuses on a discussion of give and take in hopes of reaching a truth, whether it be positive or negative (Bowen, 2007).

Public relations has had a historically negative reputation, but the profession has matured from simply disseminating information to creating conversations with publics and the media (Bowen, 2007). Consistent ethical practices not only give the profession credibility, but also assist in enhancing relationships, which is the main goal of public relations. The unethical behaviors in *The Spin Crowd* are only hurting the profession's chances of credibility.

#### *The Spin Crowd is not Alone*

If *The Spin Crowd* were the only show to portray public relations in this way, it might not be so detrimental to the industry. However, this is not a single instance. Public relations has been seen on television for several years. Shows like *Sex and the City* and *What I Like About You* were not focused solely on public relations, but these shows did include characters who worked in the industry. *Sex and the City* has the following description of the character of Samantha Jones: "Scintillating Samantha is a successful PR exec who knows what she wants – and most of the time, she gets it. She radiates confidence in everything she does, whether it's landing a star client, getting a table at the trendiest restaurant or bedding the hottest guy in a room" (HBO Website, 2010). Watching the character of Samantha, it's easy to believe that public relations is a frivolous career for people who are more concerned with getting what they want than taking care of their clients.

Valerie from *What I Like About You* is described as “a promising public relations upstart living in Manhattan” (ABC Family Website, 2011). However, early in the show, Valerie and her co-worker, Lauren, suddenly quit their public relations jobs to start a bakery. Valerie is portrayed as a control freak who has no control when it comes to her love life. She is constantly struggling with dating, and marries her former boss on a drunken night in Atlantic City (Teen Nick Website, 2011). Lauren admits to using her body for attention and loves to flirt with guys even if they are married. *What I Like About You* shows the audience that people in the public relations field don’t necessarily have the best character and aren’t very reliable. Once again, there is this idea that people who work in public relations are more concerned with attracting the opposite sex than achieving public relations success.

Recently, a number of reality shows have been created with a focus on the world of public relations. *PoweR Girls* was the first when it aired on MTV in 2005 (MTV Website, 2011). This show followed four girls as they competed for a permanent job at Lizzie Grubman’s PR firm. A summary of the show says, “Don’t miss the drama take over their lives as these four young ladies try to take over the celebrity party circuit” (MTV Website, 2011). *The Hills* and *The City* also reinforce the idea that public relations is all about being a publicist in a glamorous industry. Another common trend among these shows is that they portray public relations women as blonde, young, and white.

### *Why is Public Relations Portrayed This Way?*

As a public relations student, I have learned that public relations is more than celebrities, fashion, and entertainment. In fact this is a small percentage of the industry, but it's the largest percentage represented on television. It has become common knowledge that what is shown on reality television is not necessarily reality, and casting, set ups, and editing play a large role in creating a certain kind of reality.

The show isn't necessarily portraying what public relations really is, instead it is portraying what the producers have chosen to show. There are hours of footage, but only 22 minutes make it into an episode. The producers have to pick the footage that they think will attract the most viewers and increase ratings. Watching the show, one might believe that Command PR isn't a very good firm, but actually, the company has worked with several celebrities and created successful campaigns for many Fortune 500 companies (Command PR, 2010). The footage doesn't do the best job of showing this though because the producers have chosen to focus more on sex, parties, and drama – things they know will attract an audience.

### *Damage to the Profession*

It is no secret that drama and excitement get people's attention. However, repeated viewings decrease the shock value, so producers have to push the limits to keep the audience hooked (Pitner, 2009). Unfortunately this is negatively affecting public relations. Other industries face a similar problem. For example, *Grey's Anatomy* doesn't always portray doctors accurately or in the best light, but the difference is the awareness level of the profession. The majority of the population has a fairly accurate idea of what it

means to be a doctor. This isn't the way it is for public relations. As discussed, public relations is misunderstood. People just don't have a good grasp on what it involves, so these television shows become the primary source of information about the profession.

This is a problem for public relations practitioners because it leads to a lack of respect. Public relations professionals have to work with people from several other areas of business and need to be respected by these people. Shows like *The Spin Crowd*, work against this. Because people still don't understand the value of true public relations work, it can be difficult to be taken seriously. This is even more difficult if the only reference to public relations that people have are the shows where the public relations practitioners are partying with their bosses, shopping, and sleeping around.

#### *The Effect on Potential Public Relations Practitioners*

A lack of respect for the profession undermines the value of a public relations degree. People might believe that the time spent obtaining this degree is a waste. If this becomes a common idea, people might choose to pursue a different degree. A college education is considered an investment, so people won't want to invest their time and money working toward a degree that society doesn't value and respect.

As the media channels have evolved and the power of social media has increased, public relations has transformed into a valuable communication tool, and the growth has attracted intelligent, talented, and creative individuals (Partridge, 2011). It is worrisome that shows like *The Spin Crowd* will make the next generation of potential public relations practitioners consider advertising or marketing instead.

A different issue is that these shows are attracting students for the wrong reasons. There has been a trend in television that portrays public relations has a glamorous job for meeting celebrities. Dionne Clemons, an assistant professor of public relations at Townson University, asked her introduction to public relations class, why they chose to pursue public relations. She found that most of her students answered, “I want to work in the fashion or entertainment industry,” or “I want to work with celebrities” (Clemons, 2010). It’s ok to be interested in fashion and entertainment public relations, but people shouldn’t think that it’s the only part of the profession. Public relations reaches a wide range of industries, such as non-profits, health care, and tourism, and often celebrities are not part of the job (Wilcox, 2006).

## CONCLUSION

### *Summary*

Public relations is a growing profession that is still not well understood by many. This study found that public relations is falsely portrayed on television. *The Spin Crowd* makes it seem like the public relations world is all about appearance, sexuality, and partying. Because of the population's lack of knowledge about the profession, inaccurate portrayals can seriously harm the industry.

### *Limitations and Suggestions*

A limitation of this study was the sample size. To improve this study, researchers may want to analyze several other television shows and make comparisons among them. This study was done on a smaller scale so only three people were used to code the episodes. Having more coders would make the study even more reliable. The coder guideline could also be enhanced by either adding or removing terms or examples.

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## APENDIX

### *Coder Guidelines*

**The following terms and definitions will be used to conduct this content analysis. These operational definitions are meant to give coders a better understanding of public relations.**

According to PRSA, Public Relations encompasses the following:

Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.

Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.

Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing; financial; fund raising; employee, community or government relations; and other programs.

Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy. Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.

According to Public Relations Strategies and Tactics 8<sup>th</sup> Edition:

Public relations is more than persuasion. It should foster two-way open communication and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics

Examples of Public Relations tasks for implementation:

- Press conferences
- event planning/special events
- media alerts/news releases/ press releases
- research
- strategic planning
- campaigns
- social media
- client meetings
- crisis management
- media relations
- publicity
- media kits

fact sheets  
pitching/pitch letters

**The following terms and definitions will be used to conduct this content analysis. These operational definitions are meant to give coders a better understanding of what is considered unprofessional regarding public relations.**

Unethical behavior (See PRSA's Code of ethics)  
Degrading comments to employees/clients  
Lying  
Cheating  
Fighting with employees/clients  
Tantrums  
Arriving to work late or leaving early  
Exposing too much skin at the office

\*Appearance, sexuality and partying can also be unprofessional, but those will be counted as their own categories so they do not need to be included in this section.

**\*\*PRSA Code of Ethics**

Protect and advance the free flow of accurate and truthful information.  
Foster informed decision making through open communication.  
Protect confidential and private information.  
Promote healthy and fair competition among professionals.  
Avoid conflicts of interest.  
Work to strengthen the public's trust in the profession.  
Be honest and accurate in all communications.  
Reveal sponsors for represented causes and interests.  
Act in the best interest of clients or employers.  
Disclose financial interests in a client's organization.  
Safeguard the confidences and privacy rights of clients and employees.  
Follow ethical hiring practices to respect free and open competition.  
Avoid conflicts between personal and professional interests.  
Decline representation of clients requiring actions contrary to the Code.  
Accurately define what public relations activities can accomplish.  
Report all ethical violations to the appropriate authority.

**The following terms and definitions will be used to conduct this content analysis. These operational definitions are meant to give coders a better understanding of what is meant by “appearance,” “sexuality,” and “partying”**

**Appearance:**

Talking about, complimenting, or insulting the following:

Physical body

Clothing

Accessories

Hair

Make up

Fashion

Hot, Gorgeous, Ugly, etc.

Actions to alter one’s appearance

Comments regarding the way someone looks

**Sexuality**

Physical flirting meant to arouse or promote sexual interest

Passionate Kiss

Intimate touch (touching another person’s body in a way meant to be arousing)

Pinching, slapping, grabbing sex organs

Sexual intercourse implied or depicted

Comments about own/other’s sexual interests

Talk about sexual intercourse, sexual innuendos

Talk intended to promote future sexual behavior

Expert advice/technical information

Talk about contraception

Talk about sexually transmitted diseases

Talk about accessories for sex: sex toys, lubrication, etc.

Talk about sex organs

Nudity

**Partying**

Night club

Drinking alcohol in a social setting

References to alcohol

Being drunk or references about being drunk

Large social gathering

Dancing

Music

Talk about partying or talking about parties

Planning parties (not work related)

Drug References

## *Coder Results*

### **Professional**

<b>Episode</b>	<b>Coder A</b>	<b>Coder B</b>	<b>Coder C</b>	<b>Total/Episode</b>	<b>Average/Episode</b>
2	11	10	10	31	10
3	9	8	10	27	9
5	8	8	9	25	8
6	0	0	0	0	0
7	7	6	8	21	7
<b>Combined Total of Coders' Averages for all Episodes</b>					<b>34</b>
<b>Average/Episode</b>					<b>7</b>

### **Unprofessional**

<b>Episode</b>	<b>Coder A</b>	<b>Coder B</b>	<b>Coder C</b>	<b>Total/Episode</b>	<b>Average/Episode</b>
2	19	16	15	50	17
3	25	23	22	70	23
5	18	15	16	49	16
6	4	4	3	11	4
7	14	11	12	27	9
<b>Combined Total of Coders' Averages for all Episodes</b>					<b>69</b>
<b>Average/Episode</b>					<b>14</b>

103 occurrences of professional and unprofessional public relations.

34 are professional

69 are unprofessional

## Appearance

Episode	Coder A	Coder B	Coder C	Total/Episode	Average/Episode
2	5	5	6	16	5
3	14	11	11	36	13
5	6	7	4	17	6
6	14	14	13	41	14
7	16	15	16	47	16
<b>Combined Total of Coders' Averages for all Episodes</b>					<b>60</b>
<b>Average/Episode</b>					<b>12</b>

## Sexuality

Episode	Coder A	Coder B	Coder C	Total/Episode	Average/Episode
2	2	2	1	5	2
3	5	5	5	15	5
5	8	7	5	20	7
6	29	26	26	81	27
7	26	24	23	73	34
<b>Combined Total of Coders' Averages for all Episodes</b>					<b>75</b>
<b>Average/Episode</b>					<b>15</b>

## Partying

Episode	Coder A	Coder B	Coder C	Total/Episode	Average/Episode
2	3	3	3	9	3
3	2	2	2	6	2
5	13	13	15	41	14
6	13	13	14	40	13
7	3	3	3	9	3
<b>Combined Total of Coders' Averages for all Episodes</b>					<b>35</b>
<b>Average/Episode</b>					<b>7</b>

170 occurrences of appearance, sexuality, and partying

60 are appearance

75 are sexual

35 are partying

*Coder Charts* (on next page)

Coder 11

Episode 4 \* test

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<del>    </del> <del>    </del>	<del>    </del>

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<del>    </del> 5	 4	<del>    </del>      9

Coder A

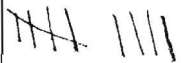

Episode 2

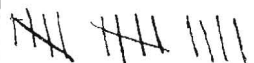


Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<del>    </del> <del>    </del>	<del>    </del> <del>    </del> <del>    </del>
11	19

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<del>    </del> 5	 2	 3

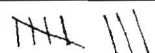
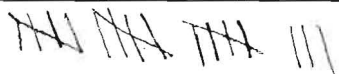


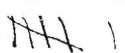


Coder A Episode 3

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
 9	 25

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
 14	 5	 2

Coder A Episode 5

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
 9	 19

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
 6	 9	 13

Coder A

Episode 6

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
0	 4

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
 14	 29	 13

Coder A

Episode 7

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
 7	 14

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
 14	 26	 3

Coder B Episode 4

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
1	

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
5	4	8

Coder B Episode 2

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
	1
10	16

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
5	2	3

Coder B Episode 3

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<del>    </del>     8	<del>    </del> <del>    </del> <del>    </del> <del>    </del>     23

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<del>    </del> <del>    </del>   11	 5	 2

Coder B Episode 5

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<del>    </del>     8	<del>    </del> <del>    </del> <del>    </del> 15

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<del>    </del>    7	<del>    </del>    7	<del>    </del> <del>    </del>     13

Coder B

Episode 6

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
0	1111 4

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
14	26	13

Coder B

Episode 7

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
6	11

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
15	24	3

Coder C

Episode 4 & test

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>12</div>	<div>     </div> <div>111</div> <div>28</div>

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<div>     </div> <div>5</div>	<div>     </div> <div>6</div>	<div>     </div> <div>7</div>

Coder C

Episode 2

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>10</div>	<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>15</div>

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<div>     </div> <div>6</div>	<div>1</div>	<div>   </div>

Coder C Episode 3

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>10</div>	<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>  </div> <div>22</div>

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>1</div> <div>10</div>	<div>     </div> <div>11</div>	<div>  </div> <div>2</div>

Coder C Episode 9

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>9</div>	<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div>

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
<div>     </div> <div>1</div>	<div>     </div>	<div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>     </div> <div>1</div> <div>2</div>

Coder C

Episode 6

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
2	10	11

Coder C

Episode 7

Public Relations	
Examples of PR Activities	Examples of Unprofessional Behavior
1	12

Appearance	Sexuality	Partying
2	23	3